



THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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	JAB-C-METER	July 18	July 19
	TAKE YOUR SHOT	51,01,567 doses	47,77,667 doses
TOTAL DOSES: 41,11,55,465			

NATIONWIDE	JULY 18	JULY 19
Fresh cases	41,157	38,164
Recoveries	42,004	38,660
Deaths	518	499

KARNATAKA	JULY 18	JULY 19
Fresh cases	1,708	1,291
Recoveries	2,463	3,015
Deaths	36	40



RETAIL SALES DIP 50% IN JUNE DESPITE UNLOCK MEASURES

Retail sales continued to be weak last month after the drastic fall in May, according to the Retailers Association of India (RAI)

SPORTS GOODS, JEWELLERY, APPAREL SALES HIT

In its latest business survey, the RAI said the highest drop was witnessed in the sports goods category at 66%, followed by jewellery (64%) and footwear (61%). Similarly, apparel and clothing sales dipped by 52% in June this year. In May 2021, the segment had reported a negative growth of 77%, according to RAI's monthly update released on Monday

FOOD, GROCERY AMONG LEAST IMPACTED

Consumer durables and electronics sales dropped 46% in June as compared to the same month in 2019. This shows a feeble improvement as the segment had posted a dip of 71% in May. Foods and grocery had the least impact with a decline of just 7% in June 2021 compared to June 2019 figures | P16

80%

THE DECLINE IN RETAIL SALES IN MAY 2021 AMID THE SECOND COVID WAVE



Students wait in squares marked to ensure social distancing for thermal screening before entering an SSLC exam centre in Mysuru on Monday | UDAYSANKAR S

For SSLC students, it is a festival of exams

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE long-awaited SSLC examination for over 8.2 lakh students commenced with festive fervor, despite the Covid pandemic, across Karnataka on Monday.

The first leg of the two-day examination was held with students attempting the core subjects - mathematics, science and social science - of 40 marks each in a span of three hours. All three papers saw an attendance of 99.6 percent. The similar format will be followed for language exams, which are scheduled for July 22.

Instructions had been given to students to mark their OMR

sheets only with blue and black ink pens. Though three subjects were clubbed for the three-hour examination, evaluation for the subject papers will be separate. Mathematics, science and social science had different OMR sheets, said an examination staff.

Social distancing and Covid norms were ensured at all examination centres. P2

FIRE BREAKS OUT AT EXAM CENTRE

Mangaluru: A fire broke out due to a short-circuit at an SSLC exam centre in Babbukatte, Ullal, near Mangaluru, on Monday, 15 minutes after the exam began. No one was hurt in the incident.

CHECK PU RESULTS AT 4PM TODAY

Bengaluru: The Department of Pre-University Education, Karnataka, will release the PU II 2021 results at 4pm Tuesday. Students and other stakeholders can check their results on the official website karresults.nic.in.

Ex-EC Ashok Lavasa's phone, too, a potential target; Oppn to hold strategy session today



Hack not established, says govt

"The consortium has accessed a leaked database of 40,000 numbers. The presence of a number does not indicate whether there was an attempted hack, or a successful one," Vaishnav said

ADR FOUNDER ON LIST

Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) founder Jagdeep Chhokar, associates of Union minister Smriti Irani and former Rajasthan chief minister Vasundhara Raje Scindia, and around 11 mobile phones belonging to a Supreme Court officer who levelled sexual harassment allegations former CJI Ranjan Gogoi were also on the list of potential targets

Rahul, Kishor, 2 ministers part of Pegasus snoop list

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

AN international collaborative investigation by journalists on Monday continued to reveal more names, including those of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, election strategist Prashant Kishor and two ministers in the Modi government, whose phones were potentially targeted for hacking using Israeli malware Pegasus.

The names, which included new IT minister Ashwini Vaishnav and Minister of State for Food Processing Prahlad Singh Patel, were revealed hours after the former defended the government in Parliament. Making a suo motu statement in Lok Sabha, Vaishnav said the report on the government using Pegasus was nothing but an attempt to malign Indian democracy and its well-established institutions. "It is not a coincidence that the reports have been published a day before the monsoon session of Parliament. In the past, similar allegations were made on WhatsApp but there is no factual basis to these and have been categorically denied," he said.

While Union home minister

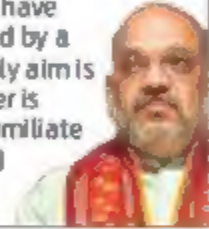
Amit Shah called it a 'report by disrupters for obstructers', the Congress sought his resignation and a probe into the role of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the matter.

The Opposition will hold a strategy session on Tuesday on how to corner the government in Parliament on Pegasus.

West Bengal Chief Minister

'Report by disrupters'

Union home minister Amit Shah called it a 'report by disrupters for obstructers' and said they have been amplified by a few whose only aim is to do whatever is possible to humiliate India on world stage | P9



Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee, renowned virologist Gagandeep Kang, India head of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Hari Menon and former election commissioner Ashok Lavasa's names also featured on the potential list of targets.

Over 1,000 Indian phone num-

bers were on the list of potential targets of which 300 were verified by the collaborative following which technical forensic analysis was performed on 22 smartphones.

The portal claimed that traces of the malware were found in Kishor's smartphone. According to the portal, the list of around 50,000 phone numbers across the world was obtained through leaked data by Amnesty International and Paris-based Forbidden Stories. The use of the malware could be confirmed on the smartphones only after forensic analysis. Some smartphones do not leave its traces and hence the potential hack could not be established.

Israeli company, the NSO group, which owns Pegasus, claims only 'vetted governments' are part of its clientele. Monday's list came a day after it was revealed that the malware was used to hack into the phones of around 40 journalists and activists critical of the government. While Lavasa's phone was added to the list after he faulted Prime Minister Modi for poll code violations, Kang's was added in 2018 and Menon's around 2019.



Officials inspect the spot where a wall collapsed at KRS reservoir in Mandya on Monday | EXPRESS

Minor wall collapse at KRS triggers panic

K SHIVA KUMAR @Mysuru

PANIC gripped people in the Cauvery basin area after a small wall at Krishnaraja Sagar Dam collapsed on Sunday evening. Irrigation Department engineers, however, said that there is no threat to the dam and the collapse occurred away from the reservoir.

Around 30 stones of the wall under a ramp connecting the KRS Dam and the Cauvery statue at Brindavan Gardens came tumbling down and it was caught on a CCTV camera installed at the dam site. The video went viral on Monday, spreading fear among farmers and people in and around the KRS reservoir. CONTINUED ON: P4

Delay in NEET-MDS counselling callous: SC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

TERMINING the Centre's approach towards conducting counselling for NEET postgraduate dental surgery courses callous, the Supreme Court on Monday directed it to file an application seeking more time to address the sticking points.

Additional Solicitor General K M Nataraj sought to shift the blame on another SC bench, saying the government was awaiting clarification on providing OBC quota to seats in the All India Quota (AIQ) pool.

A committee was formed on the instructions of the Madras High Court to decide on OBC reservation in AIQ in state-run colleges for undergraduate and postgraduate courses, but it is yet to take the final call.

While ordering the setting up of the committee on July 27 last year, the high court

had held that there was no constitutional or legal impediment to the extension of reservation for OBCs in the state-surrendered seats. The high court had also directed the panel to decide on the percentage of quota in three months. And, a three-member SC bench had in December upheld the HC order.

With the panel through the ASG seeking some more time on Monday, the Supreme Court granted one week to move an application for extension of time. "We will hear the matter after two weeks," said a bench of justices D Y Chandrachud and MR Shah.

When the bench suggested that the Centre could move an application before the three-judge SC bench on the panel, the ASG said, "We are doing that." "Doing what? You people only wake up when SC issues notices," Justice Chandrachud remarked.

DAYLIGHT HORROR

Rowdy hacked to death inside bank in Koramangala

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

IN a horrific crime committed in broad daylight, a rowdy-sheeter who was with his wife and daughter was hacked to death by a gang of eight men inside a bank in busy Koramangala on Monday afternoon. The police suspect it to be a 'supari' (contract) killing over an old rivalry.

The deceased, Joseph alias Babli, aged around 40, was a resident of Rajendra Nagar slum in Adugodi. A rowdy-sheeter of Adugodi police station, he had turned into a small-time civil contractor over the last few years.

The police said Babli, his wife and daughter had come on a two-wheeler to the Union Bank of India's branch at Koramangala 8th Block. While they were inside the bank around 1.15 pm, the eight-man gang attacked him with swords and machetes even as his wife tried to stop them. Her two fingers were chopped off as the assailants were swinging the sharp weapons wildly, the police said. Babli died on the spot, while the assailants escaped from the scene.

Some of the customers ran out of the bank thinking that the attackers were a gang of dacoits, as they had covered their faces. It is learnt that they had come on two-wheelers and sped away swiftly after committing the murder.

Soon after the crime, senior police officers rushed to the spot and a sniffer dog squad was pressed into service.

CONTINUED ON: P7

Jadhav's village will win if archers hit bullseye

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @Mumbai

WHEN Pravin Jadhav, a member of the Indian men's archery team at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, used to join his parents as a farm labourer during his boyhood, he was not doing anything very unusual.

Hundreds of other children in Sarde, a hamlet of around 1,100 in the drought-prone Satara district of Maharashtra, did the same. Acute poverty forces boys/girls of Jadhav's village to join their parents as daily wage earners to supplement their family income.

Vikas Bhujbal, a school teacher who taught the archer, said while the elders are paid ₹300 a day to work in the bajra

and jowar farms, the children who join their parents get half the sum.

Bhujbal said Jadhav's parents come from a less than humble background with no house or land of their own. "They work in the farms of others as daily wage workers. There are days they do not get work and struggle to meet daily expenses. But poverty did not stop Pravin from chasing his dream," he said.

Jadhav's village lacks basic facilities. It depends on wells and bore wells for water; the potholed roads have puddles of water in the monsoon, there is no primary health centre and the single local school is up to Class

VII only. Beyond this, the children of Sarde have to walk a fair distance to attend school.

But years of neglect appear to be slowly changing. The village has seen a steady flow of visitors, including the local MLA and MP, to meet the rising star. They presented flower bouquets to his parents and Bhujbal noticed that some of these visitors have shared those photographs on social media.

Like other fellow villagers, Bhujbal thinks if Jadhav does well at the Olympics, the village will draw attention and things will take a turn for the better. "Mere wishes are not enough to change the lives of people in our village," he said.

CONTINUED ON: P9

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